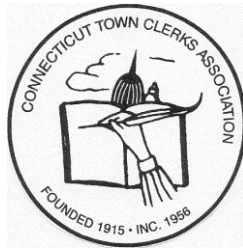


# ***Connecticut Town Clerks Association, Inc.***



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## **TESTIMONY**

### **PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE Wednesday, February 20, 2013**

#### **HB 5733 – An Act Concerning Access to a Child’s Death Certificate**

Good morning distinguished members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Joyce P. Mascena and I am the Town Clerk in Glastonbury and the President of the Connecticut Town Clerk’s Association.

The Association supports the concept of this bill to protect the privacy of families following the death of a child but recommends that the proposal be amended so that it can be properly managed. This bill proposes that before disclosing such a death certificate, the Department of Public Health and registrars of vital statistics individually in all 169 towns must interpret when an undue hardship is likely to be caused for the family of a minor child. We ask more, when is disclosure unlikely to cause a hardship whenever a child is lost?

Also as clerks, we are well aware that certain information contained in a death certificate can be used to establish identity or to locate and harass family members. The Newtown Town Clerk has brought this issue to the forefront recently and we are fully supportive of the attempt to provide some protection and privacy to the families who have lost a minor child.

The Association recommends we take a closer look at ***HB 6157 An Act Concerning Personally Identifying Information on Certifications of Marriage and Death***, which also has been introduced to this committee but has not as of yet had a Public Hearing. We believe HB 6157 would provide the protection that this bill (HB5733) & a similar one (HB5421) scheduled for a Public Hearing on Friday, February 22, are attempting to provide while ensuring appropriate access to vital records by allowing only certain information be disclosed to the general public. For example, a “death registration” would be established which would include the name, date of death and town of death. This would balance the public’s right to know with the protection and privacy that we are seeking.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce P. Mascena, MMC, MCTC  
Glastonbury Town Clerk and CTCA President